

(c) Yes, Sir. Construction of ADS would take around 10 years. In the meantime adequate force level would be maintained through suitable replacements, acquisitions, etc.

(d) The cost is likely to be about Rs. 1700 crores.

(e) and (f) Government have recently approved a proposal for construction of two submarines at Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) in order to utilise the expertise and facilities available with MDL as also to catch up with the force levels.

UNDP Report

1881. SHRI SANAT MEHTA :

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether India stands 138th in the Human Resources Development Index out of 175 countries in the world, as per the report of UNDP 1997;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Comparatively lower life expectancy at birth, lower literacy level and low real per capita Gross Domestic Product are the reasons for the low ranking.

(c) As per the Approach Paper to the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), the objectives of the Plan, inter-alia, include accelerating the growth rate of the economy, providing basic minimum services of safe drinking water, primary health care facilities, universal primary education, shelter and connectivity to all in a time bound manner.

ISRO Buys Titanium

1882. DR. M. JAGANNATH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "ISRO buys titanium, gets bricks" appearing in the *Deccan Chronicle* dated June 11, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Mishra Dhatu Nigam had imported aluminium vanadium alloy from a German firm and after converting the same into titanium alloy, it was supplied to ISRO;

(d) if so, the facts thereof; and

(e) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A consignment of 1,000 kgs of aluminium vanadium master alloy valued at Rs. 7.5 lakhs imported by Mishra Dhatu Nigam Ltd. (MIDHANI) from Germany was found to have been pilfered and substituted by construction bricks. This was discovered immediately after MIDHANI's clearing agent had delivered the consignment to the company's representatives at Bombay.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. MIDHANI has been importing aluminium vanadium master alloy from Germany for meeting its production requirements of titanium alloy for supply to ISRO.

(e) An FIR has been lodged with the police against the pilferage and the State Government of Maharashtra has been requested to expedite investigations.

International Status to Amritsar Airport

1883. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had a proposal to give international status to the Airport at Amritsar in Punjab;

(b) if so, the details of the action taken and facilities extended to give international status to the Airport at Amritsar; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be given full fledged status and facilities of an international Airport?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) The matter is under consideration.

(b) and (c) Amritsar airport has already some facilities to cater to limited international flights. Extension of runway, construction of technical block-cum-control tower and extension of apron are being planned. Air India has also been asked to resume its flights to Birmingham. Further upgradation of facilities will depend on the volume of traffic and availability of funds.

Cracks in Taj Mahal

1884. SHRIMATI SARADA TADIPARTHI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether a number of cracks have appeared in the Taj Mahal; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to repair the cracks and the time by which the repair work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMALI) : (a) and (b) As per old records, some structural cracks had developed in the Taj Mahal immediately after it was constructed. Most of them have been treated but some of them are